

Performance Management Evaluation Program

Writing SMART Objectives

I. Overview

The Achievement & Competency Enhancement Program (ACES) is an online performance evaluation system for approximately 3,500 managers in Executive Branch of state government.

There are three stages in the ACES evaluation process which include the Planning, Progress Review, and Final Review Stages.

The following is a brief description of each step in the ACES process.

<u>Planning (November – January 18, 2013)</u>	<u>Progress Review (March 4 – May 3, 2013)</u>	<u>Final Review (August 2, 2013 – October 4, 2013)</u>
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reporting Manager & Appraising Manager meet to define objectives for the year2. Reporting Manager enters between 2 - 4 Manager Objectives & 1 - 3 Career Growth Objectives onto form3. Appraising Manager reviews and edits objectives (as needed)4. Appraising Manager clicks on DONE button to move form to progress review stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appraising Manager rates Reporting Manager2. Appraising & Reporting Managers meet for mid-year review meeting3. Appraising Manager clicks on DONE button to move form to final review stage	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appraising Manager rates Reporting Manager2. Appraising Manager clicks on DONE button to move form to ACES Coordinator stage3. HRD audits ratings distribution4. ACES Coordinator moves forms into signature stage5. Appraising & Reporting Managers meet for final review meeting6. All Managers electronically and manually sign the form

II. Role Definitions

Below is a list of definitions for various roles in the ACES system. All employees using ACES are Reporting Managers. If you supervise employees in management positions, you are also an Appraising Manager in ACES.

<u>Role</u>	<u>Definition</u>
Reporting Manager	The manager being reviewed and reports to the Appraising Manager.
Appraising Manager	Completes the review of the Reporting Manager and reports to the Reviewing Manager.
Reviewing Manager	Oversees the Appraising Manager. Via dashboard reports, the reviewing manager can review the form(s) of his/her direct reports and their managers (if applicable).

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III. Planning Stage - Defining Objectives for the Year

In the Planning phase the reporting and appraising manager meet to define objectives for the year and the Reporting manager enters those objectives onto the ACES form.

1) What is an Objective?

Objectives measure what the manager must focus on improving or accomplishing for the evaluation year. Objectives are:

- Statements of targets to be achieved within a specified period of time.
- Based on the agency's overall priority goals and objectives, and those critical to the work unit.
- Not a restatement of the regular activities of the job.

2) Writing SMART Objectives

Objectives that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound) focus on outcomes allowing a manager to measure his/her progress on the objectives.

- ☐ **Specific** – Objective is precise and well-defined; it should state exactly what you want to achieve.
- ☐ **Measurable** - There is a standard (qualitative or quantitative) to determine whether the objective has been accomplished.
- ☐ **Achievable** - The objective must be accomplished according to the stated standards.
- ☐ **Realistic** - The objective must be achievable given the available resources.
- ☐ **Timebound** - There must be a timeline indicating when the objective will be completed.

Sample SMART Objective:

1. To develop a training program on Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and conduct FMLA classroom trainings for all agency managers by September 30, 2013.
2. To reduce the average time of resolving customer service issues by 25% by June 30, 2013.
3. To identify two new funding sources by December 31, 2013 ensuring that grant proposals are written, reviewed and submitted to foundation by their relative application deadlines.

Without applying SMART, these objectives may read like this instead:

- To develop FMLA training not measurable; no timeframe
- To reduce time of resolving customer service issues needs to be more than the re-statement of an activity

3) ACES Objectives

There are two types kinds of objectives in ACES: **Manager Objectives** and **Career Growth Objectives**.

a) Manager Objectives

- ☐ Define what the manager will accomplish in the coming year.
- ☐ ACES system requires between 2 and 4 Manager Objectives.
- ☐ These objectives are weighted and should add up to 100%.

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Sample Manager Objectives:

1. Implement a paper and beverage container recycling program in December 2012, with the goal of achieving 100% employee participation by February 29, 2013.
2. Decrease the amount of time taken to produce the expenditure reports by 15% over the next six months.

b) Career Growth Objectives

Career Growth Objectives are aimed at developing your skills and competencies as well as those of your reporting managers. These objectives will help you to improve performance in your current position and/or will also prepare you for future assignments and greater responsibility.

Career Growth goals should be discussed and agreed upon with your appraising manager prior to selection. In addition, appraising managers should ensure adequate funding is available for any career growth objectives in which there may be an associated cost.

There are two types of career growth objectives you can define in the ACES system. These include:

1. **Career Growth Objectives for Yourself** These are aimed at raising the level of a manager's own competencies and improving employee performance in specific work areas.
2. **Career Growth Objectives for managers who report to you.** These are aimed at developing the competencies of your reporting managers and staff as well as to improving staff performance in specific work areas.

In the ACES system, define between one and three career growth objectives for yourself and/or your direct reports.

Career Growth Objectives can take many forms: taking classes, attending seminars/professional conferences, maintaining professional certification, writing an agency newsletter, etc. For more ideas on Career Growth Objectives, please see job aid on HRD's ACES 2013 Planning Stage page at <http://www.mass.gov/anf/docs/hrd/policies/aces/2013/career-growth.doc>

Sample Career Growth Objectives for Yourself

- Attend X annual professional development seminar in February 2013 and share what was learned through presentation at March 2013 Senior Staff meeting.
- Develop leadership skills by chairing the Health Care Reform Task Force during the period of January 2013 to April 2013.
- Improve written expression by taking a course in Business Writing Skills by June 30, 2013.

Sample Career Growth Objectives to List on Your Form for Your Reporting Managers

- Ensure all direct reports have attended mandatory Human Resources Division trainings by June 30, 2013.
- Ensure the development of technology skills in reporting staff by sending them to HRD's Intermediate Microsoft Word training and assigning each staff person an IT project to complete successfully by July 2013.

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c) Milestones

Milestones are activities that you complete toward reaching your objective. Milestones are optional on the ACES form. Start and end dates may be tracked on your ACES form to list the beginning and end dates of when each task is completed.

Sample Objective and Milestones

Objective: Partner with Information Technology Division to define system requirements, deliver agency training and launch the new Commonwealth Employment Opportunities (CEO) web site by Sept. 30, 2013

Milestones:

- Participate in biweekly project status meetings
- Write and gain agreement with ITD on functional requirements specification
- Create test scripts
- Conduct user testing sessions with agency HR staff
- Develop, review, and publish training materials
- Develop and implement communication plan to state agencies on new system
- Deliver training to agency CEO users